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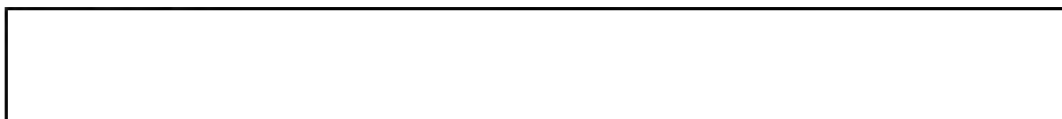
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USSR: A Soviet contact of the US Embassy in Moscow has said that the Russians will use "new weapons" against the Chinese if there is a further outbreak of border conflict but denies that a pre-emptive strike is being planned.

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The reference to "new weapons" was made in a context which did not exclude the use of tactical nuclear weapons. It was voiced, on his own initiative, by [redacted] in a conversation [redacted] with an officer of the US Embassy. [redacted] sought to make it clear that he was revealing the thinking of "higher levels" in Moscow. He has given the embassy accurate information in the past in connection with the Sino-Soviet issue. [redacted] said that if the Chinese persist, as Moscow thinks they will, in provoking armed clashes along the Sino-Soviet border, the Soviets will use "new weapons" to demonstrate to Peking that the Soviets do not intend to be "bled white."

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These are not entirely new notes. The letter which Moscow sent [redacted] Communist Party also had said that Moscow was determined not to be bled white by the Chinese. As for weapons, a Soviet diplomat had claimed last spring that the Soviets had shown the Chinese a "new weapon or two" during the second clash on the Ussuri River. He denied, at the same time, that he meant nuclear weapons and the reference may have been to improved conventional munitions.

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In the more recent case, however, [redacted] passed up the chance given him to rule out the use of nuclear weapons against the Chinese. His assertion that Moscow would let the Chinese "know" before "new weapons" were used also implied a nuclear threat. At the same time, [redacted] disavowed press reports that Moscow was planning a pre-emptive strike against China, ascribing these to a US attempt to further disturb relations between Moscow and Peking.

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Despite the ambiguities of [] meaning, he came as close as any Soviet source has yet come to saying that Moscow is ready to escalate its military response to Chinese border provocations. It is possible that his purpose was to forewarn the US that the USSR might even go so far as to use tactical nuclear weapons. More probably his intent was to leave the impression that Moscow is in earnest about dealing with the Chinese military problem while discouraging speculation about a pre-emptive attack. []

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NOTES

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Iran: Negotiations between Iran and the Western oil consortium on revenues for 1970 will begin in London next week. As usual, there is a large gap between Iranian demands and consortium revenue estimates. The Shah is also pressing consortium members to meet their estimates for 1969, and is pointing to the coup in Libya as further proof that Iran's stability entitles it to special treatment. In the past the parties have been able to avert a showdown, but consortium members appeared recently to be pessimistic about the new round. The meetings next week are likely to be a prelude to many months of stiff negotiations.

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